A BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF WAR, PEACE AND NONRESISTANCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	The Problem of the Present Study The Purpose of the Present Study The Procedure of the Present Study	
II.	THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BIBLICAL NONRESISTANCE AND PACIFISM	3
	The Definition of Terms Nonresistance and Pacifism The Basic Types of Pacifism	
III.	THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ON NONRESISTANCE	13
	The Nonresistant Approach to War and Peace The Use of Human Vengeance by God	
IV.	THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON NONRESISTANCE	30
	The Delineation of New Testament Nonresistance The Demand of Nonresistance as an Integral Part of the Gospel The Description of the State	
V.	THE PROPHESIED PLAN OF GOD FOR PEACE	58
	The Need for Preaching the Gospel in Times Like These The Return of Christ to Establish His Righteous Government	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		65

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written and said concerning the issue of pacifism but little is known of biblical nonresistance, even though the Brethren, the Mennonite, and the Quaker churches have held this position for years. Yet, even less appears to be known, as well as written, concerning the ethics of war in spite of many periodical articles which attempt to touch on the Christian's attitude toward war. Throughout the history of the world men have in one way or another sought to battle each other, and especially in times like these when lawlessness has permeated the nations of the world, it is imperative that a biblical understanding be made regarding the theological significance and the practical problems related to the Christian's relationship to his heavenly Father, his church, the state, and his neighbor.

The Problem of the Present Study

The problem for a Christian understanding of the precepts of biblical nonresistance involves a correct view of the Bible as God's Word, a consistent application of the principles of hermeneutics, and a comprehensive utilization of systematic theology. While some nonresistant exponents disagree over the question of Old Testament wars, there is general agreement on the employment of New Testament teaching concerning the Christian's nonparticipation in war. With nonresistance

espoused as a biblical principle, and a way of life, it is incumbent that the Christian lucidly recognize his proper position both in principle as well as practice.

The Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is (1) to collect, collate, correlate and classify the theological data of the writings of both biblical and non-biblical nonresistance in order to construct a comprehensive theological framework; and (2) to proffer the nonresistant's distinctive contribution to the scriptural foundation of the Christian relative to God's holiness, justice and righteousness as a whole and with special reference to the Christian's attitude toward the ethics of war.

The Procedure of the Present Study

The procedure of the present study will begin with the precepts of biblical nonresistance and modern pacifism. Recognizing the need for substantial verification of the Christian's attitude toward war, the Old and New Testament teaching on war and peace are surveyed. In conclusion, the prospects of the prophesied plan of God for peace are presented in relation to the need for preaching the gospel and the fact of Christ's return to earth which will establish universal peace, justice and righteousness.

CHAPTER II

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BIBLICAL NONRESISTANCE AND PACIFISM

The Definition of Terms

It is impossible to deal with the subject under study without an understanding of the terms used by the nonresistants, the pacifists, and the Christian militarists. Such terms which need clarification would include a biblical aggregation of the Christian, the church, the state, the just war, nonresistance and pacifism.

Christian

The nonresistant and pacifist use of Christian is one who is a follower of Christ emphasizing the need for the person to do something in addition to the initial response of belief in Christ. The non-biblical pacifist will emphasize the precepts of Christ's teaching rather than the person of Christ. This type of Christian is viewed by what he continues to do rather than what Christ accomplished in His finished work on the cross. This is belief in Christ plus a demonstration of works. The biblical declaration for Christian is one who has heard the gospel message whereby through the gift of God he was saved from sin and reconciled to God by faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ, Who obtained the believer's redemption by His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross. This salvation can be received only as a gift through faith, since guilty sinners have nothing to offer for salvation.

Church

Both the biblical resistant and nonresistant view the church as the mystical body of Christ which consists of all the regenerate through faith in Him. However, the true differentiation between these proponents is seen in their application of the local church in relation to the community, the nation, and the world. The secular pacifist views the church as the visible organization of Christianity whose purpose it is to reform society into living as a Christian community.

State

The biblical nonresistant views the state as a "sovereign, a political and social body, occupying a definite territory, which expresses itself in the government of its people by one of a number of types of human government. Its function is to maintain law and order."[1] Yet, the evil structure of the state is enunciated as necessary for its governing operation over sinful society. Little allowance, if any, is made for godly leaders in the high ranking positions of state. The resistant view emphasizes exercising one's responsibility and obligation to the state which recognizes that the state's privileges require practical obedience. The nature or character of a government resides in the purpose and behavior of that government and not in the divine ordained principle.

Just war

The concept of the just war endeavors to distinguish between

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[1] Archie Penner, The Christian, the State, and the New Testament (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1959), p. 19.

the morality of starting a war and defending oneself against unlawful aggression. The basic thesis of the just war is the identifying of an adequate cause which recognizes that there could be only one side justified in fighting in addition to using war as a last resort.

Pacifism and nonresistance

In defining pacifism and nonresistance, the former term is broad by its attitude and practice of being opposed to war, while the latter term is a narrow one because of its strict application of abstention from the use of force and violence in the attainment of ends. This principle is not restricted to war but is applied to private, social, and governmental relations of the Christian. It is basically a question of absolute obedience to God's will which is displayed by applying the New Testament law of love.

It must be recognized that there are exceptions to each defined term because numerous authors have been consulted in this research which provides for individualism. Many Christian pacifists parallel the secular pacifists since the attachment of the Christian term merely labels them with a religious association. Likewise, this vacillating is seen regarding the state. Some biblical nonresistants do not banish the state into a satanic seclusion but allow the elements of good and bad to ravage against one another within the state.

Nonresistance and Pacifism

With the exponents of nonresistance and pacifism declaring their distinctives as a necessary part of their movements, this differentiation

is brought forth in the classic volume on biblical nonresistance by Hershberger with the following insights:

> Nonresistance and pacifism are both Scriptural terms, taken from the Sermon on the Mount. The former is taken from the words of Jesus, "Resist not him that is evil." The latter comes from the words, "Blessed are the peacemakers." In the Latin Bible the word for peacemakers is pacifici, the direct English form of which is pacifists. There is nothing objectionable about the term "pacifism" as far as its original meaning goes. In some ways it is preferable to nonresistance, because it is positive in its suggestion, while nonresistance seems more negative. In evaluating any term, however, its original meaning is not as important as its present use. The term "nonresistance" as commonly used today describes the faith and life of those who accept the Scriptures as the revealed will of God, and who cannot have any part in warfare because they believe the Bible forbids it, and who renounce all coercion, even nonviolent coercion. Pacifism, on the other hand, is a term which covers many types of opposition to war. Some modern pacifists are opposed to all wars, and some are not. Some who oppose all wars find their authority in the will of God, while others find it largely in human reason.[1]

Because many other differences are found among the modern pacifists it is important to produce a classification of modern pacifists, and to compare and evaluate their theories.

The Basic Types of Pacifism

Many pacifist types could be listed due to a variation in their precepts and practices but it is more feasible for this thesis to approach what are considered the basic types which are observable in today's world. Such types of pacifism would include: Quaker pacifism, liberal Protestant pacifism with its involvement of the social gospel ideology that culminated in twentieth-century pacifism, Gandhi pacifism and nonviolent resistance.

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[1] Guy F. Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953), p. 171.

Quaker pacifism

According to Quaker theology man is inherently good who needs only to worship God by meditation whereby what evil may exist in the world is overcome by man's concern. The logical step of Quakerism is made as interest is shown in eliminating war, striving for righteousness in economic and political life, stimulating education, treating all humans as equal, and witnessing to the testimony of integrity, simplicity and sincerity in every walk of life. The assumptions of the immanence of God and of His continuing direct revelation to man underlay the early Quaker peace testimony. The early Quaker added the proposition that the most basic duty of man is to seek guidance from God who may speak through Scripture, lay literature, experience, or even directly to the understanding. It seemed to follow that men ought to obey God always and the state only as long as it does not contravene God's will. In good conscience early Quakers became convinced that the method of violent coercion was not God's will for them and, hence, was not their duty to the state. War was a carnal sin prohibited to the true Christian disciple. Yet fighting was a necessary condition of the unredeemed world.

Humanity was believed to be able to strive toward greater purity both in principle and practice as the state was brought under Christianizing influences which would involve the elimination of war. The Quaker humanitarianism which has embraced numerous civil reforms fell radically short when international application of pacifist policy had to be applied. Contemporary Quakerism is viewed as religious humanitarianism in relationship to their involvement with the governments of state.

Liberal Protestant pacifism

The modern peace movement as it is known today is dependent upon the former leadership by Protestant pacifist ministers within a number of the denominations. The projection of this group involved the humanist philosophy drawing most of its strength from the eighteenth-century philosophies of France and England rather than from the New Testament. As a spokesman for a school of religious idealists, William E. Channing, a Unitarian minister, had great faith in man and his progressive possibilities. Hershberger describes Channing's theories:

> Channing emphasized the dignity and goodness of man to such an extent that he underestimated the power of sin; and he was too optimistic as to the possibilities for social progress through the mere application of human intelligence. In his thinking, human reason is above revelation; man has a spark of the divine within himself; sin is not part of his nature. There is no sharp contrast between holiness and sin. According to this view Christ is not the redeemer of man, but rather his example. This view removes the need of personal regeneration; man through his own efforts, with a noble example to inspire him, is capable of infinite progress. Inspired by this idea, Channing looked for the early dawn of a golden age, not through regeneration as taught in the New Testament, but through intellectual and social enlightenment. In so doing he pointed the way to modern religious liberalism and the popular idealistic pacifism of the twentieth century.[1]

The social gospel is expressed as the component which is used to spearhead the thoughts and ideals of society's endeavor to obtain peace throughout the world. Notably the social gospel does not seek to regenerate man from a sinful world since he is inherently good and not in need of personal salvation. The salvation sought after is social which consists of reforming the world by means of education and civil reform programs. When the environment of society is changed, then this reformed influence

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[1] Ibid., pp. 177-78.

will pervade the world and reform the international affairs of men causing them to live in peace. The emphasis is on the social order and its institutions.

When the liberal Protestant idealism negates the world's sinfulness toward God then it is obvious why man is challenged to fulfill his dream of a man-made utopia where peace will dwell. The mistake of the modern religious liberal pacifist is seen in his confusing of the kingdom of God with mere moral improvements with sinful society, whereby he has identified the kingdom of God with the sinful social order itself. By rejecting the gospel's demand for personal salvation in Christ the pacifist has substituted an anemic sociological evolution. The liberal church has used the pulpit for a platform to inculcate political philosophies permeated with pacifism. The liberal church is striving to save civilization without saving the souls for Christ within that civilization.

Gandhi pacifism

One of the religious leaders erroneously categorized as belonging to the teachings of Christianity was Gandhi. While the teachings of Jesus impressed Gandhi, his philosophical source was centered in the concepts of sacrificial suffering as found in the Hindu religion of his native India. The Hindu idea teaches that men must undergo self-imposed sacrificial suffering as a means of appeasing the gods. Gandhi's specific contribution to his people was to apply this Hindu philosophy of victorious suffering to his nation's political relationships, whereby such actions were considered as a means of appeasing the human tyrants. Yet political revolution was Gandhi's primary objective. Hershberger clarifies this new type of

warfare by Gandhi:

> The very title of Shridharani's book, War Without Violence, brings this out most vividly. Shridharani, a disciple of Gandhi and an exponent of nonviolence, himself says: "And perhaps to the surprise of my Western readers, Satyagraha seems to have more in common with war than with Western pacifism." He goes on to explain that there are also important differences between Satyagraha and violent warfare. Obviously, bloodshed is absent, at least as long as Satyagraha is kept under control. But this does not do away with the fact that nonviolent resistance is resistance. It is a form of coercion or compulsion. Its purpose is to compel the enemy to give up. Besides fasting and prayer, Satyagraha uses such methods as negotiation, arbitration, agitation, demonstration, the ultimatum, the general strike, picketing, the sit-down strike, economic boycott, nonpayment of taxes, emigration, non-co-operation, ostracism, civil disobedience, and setting up a new government to take the place of the old.[1]

It was Gandhi's fundamental purpose to use the Satyagraha method to compel his enemy to comply with his wishes against the will of his enemy, which was in no way an attempt to apply the biblical golden rule, the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, or the application of love.

Nonviolent resistance

This is a particular type of pacifism which is popularly employed today and is termed by some as "nonviolent coercion." The program culminates in a scheme of political pressure as the established government is challenged in the effort to demand changes for the cause of justice.

America has been strongly influenced by Gandhi's nonviolent program which has appeared on the contemporary scene as a mixture of religious liberalism with its social gospel, Satyagraha, and nonviolent resistance. The religious-political pacifists have amalgamated these pacifist philosophies to force the social and political changes they so desire.

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[1] Ibid., p. 190.

The race problem within the United States of America illustrates how pacifists have seized upon Gandhi's techniques and employed them through their coercive efforts in their program of nonviolent resistance.

A paradox is obvious to the pacifist philosophy when force is employed by the practicing pacifist. Force and nonresistance are opposite concepts and contradictory. When force is employed by a pacifist to seek social redemption or demanded justice, then why is force rejected when a nation seeks to defend itself from an aggressive enemy?[1]

When nonresistant love is expressed, the kingdom of God is represented as the actual realization of God's way in history. The socialist's kingdom of God is enunciated in the pacifist's gospel.[2] Although many pacifists have repudiated the concept of "inevitable progress," they have retained the kingdom of God on earth idea on the basis that their faith validates itself in social progress. Such a program is pure utopianism.[3] As long as the kingdom concept is posited as a possibility, it is considered as a self-validating social idea. Nonetheless, the pacifist's neglect of biblical teaching forces him to retain the idea of the kingdom within men by describing it as latent goodness which can be realized.[4] Whereas the pacifist promotes peace on earth as a human possibility achievable through legalistic repudiation of war, unilateral disarmament, and the cessation of nuclear testing, the biblical program of realized peace on earth is pos-

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[1] B. Throckmorton, Jr., "The Teachings of Jesus and Pacifism," The Joy of Study, ed. S. Johnson (New York: Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 18.

[2] E. C. Chatfield, Jr., "Pacifism and American Life: 1914 to 1941" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Graduate School of Vanderbilt University, 1965), p. 388.

[3] Ibid., pp. 392-93.

[4] Ibid., p. 397.

sible only in the Lord Jesus Christ who will at His appointed time return to earth to establish a world filled with peace.

The secular pacifist is clearly represented in an edited book by Elizabeth Hollins who pleas for world peace through world law.[1] The volume as a whole rests upon the humanistic assumption that peace is possible simply because rational men can and will find a rational solution to the world crises. Their world government is built upon the sands of human merit, on the assumption that the human mind and will is fully capable of solving the great problems that confront humanity today. Even the Old Testament prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit, looked beneath the surface of national life to find the things that mar and destroy a nation. In their messages God's diagnosis of sin, His hatred of it, and the certainty of judgment is seen, all coupled with His yearning love for a wayward people and appeals to return to Him and live. The advocates of the ideals of "passive resistance" assert theories which have been grossly overglamorized, especially when they shift gears into advocating "planned surrender" under the false premise that survival is the greatest human virtue.[2]

With pacifism unable to posit any substantial criteria for the Christian to incorporate into his philosophy of life, it is incumbent that an examination be given to the program of biblical nonresistance to see if it is indeed doctrinally true and exhorted as Christian duty.

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[1] E. J. Hollins, ed., Peace Is Possible: A Reader on World Order (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1966), p. 9.

[2] Harold B. Kuhn, "Christian Surrender to Communism," Christianity Today, III (March 2, 1959), 11.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ON NONRESISTANCE

Christians differ in their understanding of portions of the Scriptures, and particularly so with reference to the doctrine of nonresistance. This is due in part to the difference in moral teachings between the Old and New Testaments. It is the contention, however, by most nonresistant writers that the Old and New Testaments agree that the way of peace is God's way for His people at all times; that war and bloodshed were never intended to have a place in human conduct.

The Nonresistant Approach to War and Peace

While most biblical nonresistant writers slight the Old Testament, if not completely ignore it, Hershberger makes a noteworthy examination in his classic volume. The primary areas which he considered important as well as his key Old Testament passage for biblical nonresistance will be analyzed according to the literal hermeneutical principles of biblical exegesis.

According to Hershberger's reasoning the state is a sinful society which by reason of the law of cause and effect respond to acts of sin with judgment upon their sinful society. It is a case of circular argument but Hershberger applies this definition consistently throughout his volume. The question must be asked whether the operation of law and order in society is sinful which is implied when Hershberger declares that the state's executioners also sin when punishment is judicially inflicted.

With this penetrating presupposition Hershberger's application of the fundamental moral law is centered in the sixth commandment:

> We must remember, however, that in the Ten Commandments, and in the teachings of Christ, God has given the fundamental moral law for the Christian who is not ruled by the passions of the natural man. This fundamental moral law is above the law of cause and effect which operates in human nature, and it says: "Thou shalt not kill." Therefore he who takes a human life, even if he acts legally as an official of the state, is violating the will of God for His people.[1]

His argument is essentially circular when he defines the meaning of the word "kill" in Exodus 20:13. To him all killing is murder. If this is true then God Himself would have to be labeled a murderer. Hershberger's use of theological semantics does not suffice as an interpretation. The meaning of the Hebrew word used for "kill" in Exodus 20:13 is a special word which can only mean "murder" and always indicates intentional slaying. This, Hershberger and most nonresistant writers cannot accept. Yet, it is interesting to note that Hershberger considers Cain's violation a specific act of "murder" even though it occurred prior to the giving of the fundamental moral law.[2]

The institution of governmental rule along with its right to employ capital punishment is relegated to a lowering of God's standard in dealing with men. God is viewed as permitting sinful society to imbed itself further into sin when they respond with acts of justice upon their fellow men. However, God established capital punishment in connection with the establishment of human government. He put into the hands of men

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[1] G. F. Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953), p. 22.

[2] Ibid., p. 21.

the highest principle of government when He delegated the power to take life under certain conditions (Gen. 9:5-6). That power and government is God-given. The taking of life in capital punishment is by the express command of God. Such killing is not murder. It is not by the volition of man, but by the volition of God. God delegated that right to men for the maintenance of a social order based upon righteousness. Mercy to the murderer is cruelty to the community. He who advocates the abolition of capital punishment assumes to be wiser, more loving, more just, and more merciful than God Himself.

In the Mosaic law the thought of capital punishment is reiterated. "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death" (Exod. 21:12). The executed man thus loses his life by the will and command of God. There is no double standard of sin. God does not ordain any man to do wrong. When a Christian is properly employed by governing authorities in quelling injustices, protecting the good and punishing criminals, he is acting as an officer of the state and as such is a minister of God for this purpose.

Killing in war comes under this category. When a soldier shoulders a rifle to defend his country, to repel an invading enemy, acting under orders from his authorized government, he is in reality an officer of God. Hateful as killing always is, a soldier fighting a war is not a murderer. Klassen indicates this distinction between killing and murder:

> We all know the sixth commandment. "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17). On the surface it seems this word from the decalogue ought to terminate our discussion. That all forms of taking life are not precluded by this law, however, becomes obvious when we note another: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). Even more to the point is that in

both the Hebrew and Greek references to the sixth commandment the word translated "kill" is one which means "murder."

That this distinction was recognized becomes clear in the story of David. When as a young man he dared to face and slay Goliath, he became a hero of faith. When in later years he sends Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, to the most dangerous battlefront with the intent that he be killed by the enemy, he became a murderer. Such a conviction may not have held in an earthly court, but such was the judgment of God (II Samuel 12:1-9).[1]

The key passages of Hershberger's Old Testament argument are Numbers 13 and 14 which are viewed in relation to Exodus 23:20-33. The incident at Kadesh-barnea is the key to his approach to Israel's subsequent history with special consideration toward the conquest of Canaan. He tries to see an act of sin when the Israelites request to send men to search out the land as he contrasts Numbers 13:1-2 with Deuteronomy 1:21-23. But this is only a straw case as Deuteronomy 1:22 indicates their request to spy out the land was for the purpose of establishing "what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come." Their request was a legitimate desire to know what procedure they would need to employ in conquering the land, not whether to go at all into the land.

Israel's sin of disobedience at Kadesh-barnea is said to have resulted in God using His permissive will when Canaan was finally conquered. Israel's eventual downfall and captivity after possessing the land many years is said to be a result of this particular disobedient sin at Kadesh-barnea along with Israel's desire to use carnal warfare. But the biblical context shows that the sin, as deadly as it was, was immediately implemented upon those who disobeyed God's command to enter the promised

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[1] Randolph Klassen, "A Matter of Conscience," His, XXVIII (June, 1968), 15.

land. Only those select few who declared their desire for obedience to God's command were spared from death in the wilderness along with the unaccountable generation of Israel.

If, as assumed by Hershberger,[1] this sin of disobedience to God's command to enter the promised land peacefully is imputed to those Israelites whom God permitted to conquer the land some forty years later, then certain questions must be answered according to the historical facts recorded in the Scriptures. If the younger generation receives an equal accountability for this sin of disobedience at Kadesh-barnea, then why would God allow them to enter, or even approach, the promised land? God would have to judge them to apply His judgment consistently, unless this sin of disobedience is not imputed to this generation of Israelites. To equate this sin of disobedience at Kadesh-barnea theologically with that of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden regarding the imputation of the act of sin is completely untenable.

If this sin of disobedience is likewise applied to Israel's new leaders, Joshua and Caleb, why did God allow them to approach and conquer the land? However, the text states specifically that these men of Israel were the only two who faithfully and truthfully gave their report concerning the land. They were the only two spies who urged obedience to God's command. Therefore, if these two "obedient" spies are urging a peaceful conquering of the land at this time, why do they actually conquer the land some forty years later by force? There is no biblical record for

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[1]Hershberger, pp. 31-32.

their change of method to conquer the land. Neither are these two leaders condemned for their militaristic approach when the land of Canaan is conquered. Instead, God continues to describe these leaders of Israel as obedient ones as He did in the present context of study.

Why was not Moses judged as accountable for this sin of disobedience as the others were, but instead received judgment for his own specific act of disobedience in Numbers 20:2-13? Indeed Moses act of sin had nothing whatsoever to do with a nonresistant approach to conquering the promised land.

The presemptuous and unsuccessful attempt to enter the land according to Numbers 14:39-45 is likewise supposed to indicate a violation of nonresistant principles for conquering the land. The passage does not say whether these rebellious Israelites approached peacefully or by means of force, because the essential fact is that God was no longer with them. Thus, the enemy uses weapons of force to destroy these rebellious and disobedient Israelites. Moses firmly asserts that God had pronounced His judgment upon those who acted in disobedience, for the Lord is no longer among you disobedient ones. This is a clue to the successful conquest of the land since God must be with those who would enter the land, and He was. If the original objective was to be a peaceful conquest certainly Joshua and Caleb would have understood that this presumptuous and unsuccessful attempt was a convincing illustration not to use weapons of force. But this premise is false as the context reveals.

When Hershberger refers back to Exodus 23:20-33 where God gives His instructions and promises concerning the conquest of the land, an at-

tempt is made to show that this divine plan involved:

> First, God would remove the Canaanites by supernatural means. Second, the removal would be gradual, only as fast as Israel itself would be able to occupy the land through increase of its population. And third, the success of this program depended entirely on Israel keeping itself free from the wicked and depraved Canaanite tribes, morally, socially, and religiously. That is, strict obedience to God and the peaceful penetration of Canaan were to go together.[1]

Hershberger concludes that Israel's fightings were the consequence of her own sins, and contrary to the original intention of God. God's original intention for conquering the land is thereby restricted to this passage in Exodus 23. What appears to be another naive view of this passage is given when he says:

> But there is no mention here of armed force, and the tenor of the entire passage suggests that the driving out was to be accomplished without violence. God in His own way would provide the Canaanites with a motive to migrate as the new settlers approached.[2]

It is difficult to understand how his interpretation fails to see that the reason for God's severe judgment upon the Canaanites was due to their gross sin and immorality. To simply transfer the Canaanites from one piece of land to another does not answer the prophesied destruction of these people. God had already destroyed whole cities before as evidenced by Sodom and Gomorrah indicating that He does not treat sin lightly nor will He overlook the sinful practices of those who stoop to the very depths of iniquity by allowing the Canaanites to transfer to another piece of real estate.

What becomes a consistent pattern in describing the conquest of the land is revealed within this passage as seen in verse 31. There is

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[1] Ibid., p. 31. [2] Ibid.

a dual feature described which is reiterated again and again when describing the actual conquest. God will "deliver" the land and its inhabitants into Israel's hand, while Israel will "drive" them out. This parallel thought is used again when the conquest is put into operation, but Israel's descriptive word is changed to "destroy" those whom God delivers into Israel's hand.

In Hershberger's quotation of Exodus 23:20-33 he leaves out verses 23 through 27 which deal with specific instructions relative to Israel's conquest. Exodus 23:24 is quite emphatic in its instruction to destroy the corrupt land of Canaan involving both the people and their vile practice of idolatry.

Since Hershberger's interpretation of Exodus 23:20-33 is found to be inconsistent with a normal, literal exegesis of the passage, the remainder of his Old Testament analysis crumbles apart when he finds his presuppositions will not fit into his mold of nonresistance. Without his use of theological gymnastics by ascribing society's responses of justice as part of God's permissive will, he has no foundation for biblical nonresistance.

The Use of Human Vengeance by God

While an analysis of each book of the Old Testament would saturate the case with evidence against nonresistance, it is the purpose of this part of the thesis to present, first, a foundation for God's extermination of the Canaanites; second, a brief theological analysis of God's wrath in contrast to His love; and finally, a biblical survey of Old Testament passages demonstrating God's use of human vengeance.

God's extermination of the Canaanites

To try and separate the practice of idolatry with all its graven images from the person who practices idolatry would not suffice the judgment of God. His judicial holiness demands that there be a complete destruction of both the corrupt practice as well as the practitioners of idolatry. God's command of utter destruction was a demonstration of His sovereignty in causing His people to worship Him alone in purity and truth which would bring Him glory and honor for His name's sake.

In reference to the Canaanite extermination, Girdlestone enunciates several points that should be considered:

> First, it was not taken in hand to accomplish personal revenge; Israel had no grudge against Canaan; the people had to be almost goaded into the land. Secondly, it was not done to gain plunder, for all plunder was regarded as cherem, devoted to God, and in that sense accursed. Thirdly, it was not done to gratify thirst for military glory; for the Hebrews were the smallest of nations, and were told beforehand that if they conquered it would not be in their own strength, but in God's. Fourthly, it was not to be regarded as a reward for merit; they were a rebellious and stiff-necked people, and would have perished in the wilderness had not God remembered His holy covenant. Fifthly, the extermination of the Canaanites was to be a security against idolatry and demoralization on the part of Israel. Lastly, these nations had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Israelites in destroying them were acting magisterially as God's agent.[1]

The Hebrew word used is הָרַס which is used as "destroy" some forty times. Girdlestone relates that: "In almost all of these places reference is made to the destruction of the nations of Canaan and the surrounding country of Israel."[2]

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[1] Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1897), p. 280.

[2] Ibid., pp. 279-80.

In order to discern the depth of the command to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan the holiness of God must come into proper focus and perspective. In view of God's repeated exhortations to Israel to keep themselves from other gods, the nations listed in the land of Canaan were to be destroyed so that their sensual, idolatrous, worship would not be the cause of Israel's downfall. God's command: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3) pinpoints the necessity for the Canaanite's utter destruction.

William Kennedy in his analysis of this problem for the extermination of the Canaanites relates:

> The nature of the command is that of devoting to God that which, or those who are opposed to the fundamental law of the covenant. . Those who will not in life devote themselves to God, when placed under the ban, are devoted to Him in death. In reference to the Canaanites, they are placed under the ban, that is, devoted to God, and thus they cannot be redeemed but must be destroyed. The reason for their being placed under the ban is because of their wicked idolatrous worship.[1]

It is apparent that if Israel did not carry out the command of God to destroy the Canaanites, they would fall prey to the Canaanite's seduction into participating in their sex-centered idol worship due to Israel's weak stature as exemplified in Exodus 32. Moses interceded with Jehovah when the people of Israel had offended God's holiness by worshipping the golden calf which was their violation of the first of the ten commandments. The restoration of Israel to God's favor was based on His purpose for the nation of Israel as revealed in the Abrahamic covenant.

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[1] William H. Kennedy, "The Moral Problem of the Extermination of the Canaanites" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1961), p. 35.

Unger gives keen insight to the Canaanite's extermination when he says:

> The principle of divine forbearance, however, operates in every era of God's dealings with men. God awaits till the measure of iniquity is full, whether in the case of the Amorite (Gen. 15:16), or the wicked antediluvian race, which He destroyed by the flood (Gen. 6), or the degenerate dwellers of Sodom and Gomorrah, whom He consumed by fire (Gen. 19). In the case of the Canaanites, instead of using the forces of nature to effect His punitive ends, He employed the Israelites as the ministers of His justice. The Israelites were apprized of the truth that they were the instruments of the divine justice (Josh. 5:13, 14). In the light of the total picture the extermination of the Canaanites by the Israelites was just and the employment of the Israelites for the purpose was right. It was a question of destroying or being destroyed, of keeping separated or of being contaminated and consumed.[1]

The Canaanites were not driven off the promised land to some other territory but were designated for destruction by Israel in response to God's judgment. Hershberger argues that the conquest by carnal warfare violated God's sixth commandment in His moral law, but to allow His covenant to stand fulfilled before the world He asserted His permissive will in allowing Israel's carnal conquest. But Hershberger must reckon with the moral character of God if he holds to God's permissive will by allowing Israel to violate the sixth commandment in conquering the land, since God did not use His permissive will to allow Israel to violate the other nine commandments. God punished Israel for idolatry, for adultery, for disregard of the Sabbath, but not for resort to war in self-defense. Instead, He often commands their participation in such a war.

The Scriptures demonstrate the severity of judgment in the con-

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[1] Merrill F. Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), p. 176.

quest when sin is committed as illustrated by the abortive destruction of Ai. Covetousness led to theft which caused Israel to stand before God and give account of this sinful activity. The offender and his family were put to death. Indeed such severity in judgment was issued at Kadesh-barnea when God's commandments were violated resulting in all those whom God held accountable being sentenced to their death in the wilderness.

Instead of Israel's future capitulation into captivity being labeled as a result of entering into the land by means of carnal warfare, their disasterous downfall was due to their initial failure to exterminate the Canaanites fully as God had commanded. Rather than rid the land of its corrupt inhabitants as God instructed Israel to do they allowed the inhabitants to remain in parts of the land which ultimately led to the intermingling of the people.

W. F. Albright, a renowned scholar of Oriental studies, views in retrospect the outcome of the conquest of Canaan by Israel:

> It was fortunate for the future of monotheism that the Israelites of the Conquest were a wild folk, endowed with primitive energy and ruthless will to exist, since the resulting decimation of the Canaanites prevented the complete fusion of the two kindred folk which would almost inevitably have depressed Yahwistic standards to a point where recovery was impossible. Thus, the Canaanites, with their orgiastic nature-worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology, were replaced by Israel, with its pastoral simplicity and purity of life, its lofty monotheism, and its severe code of ethics.[1]

As God's "peculiar treasure" (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; 26:18), the nation of Israel is to display itself as a holy nation separated unto God to live

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[1] William Foxwell Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 281.

to His praise and glory (Lev. 20:24-36).

With a clear understanding of God's command for the extermination of the Canaanites, the next step is to correlate God's wrath with His love.

God's wrath in contrast to His love

All sin elicits the wrath of God, for His holiness is absolute and uncompromised, and repulsed by any form or degree of iniquity. God's wrath is never the expenditure of personal rancor and bitter malice upon helpless and undeserving victims. God's wrath must be comprehended in the sphere of His justice and righteousness. Justice is pre-eminently a quality of God; it was His in unique measure before it became the characteristic of His people. Toombs presents God's love expressed through His justice:

> Understood in this sense, justice is an appropriate word to describe what Yahweh did for his people when he first found them in slavery in Egypt. They were the helpless victims of exploitation at the hands of the most powerful nation and ruler of the age. Yahweh ranged himself on the side of the exploited and decreed liberty for them in words which may almost be taken as the topic sentence of Old Testament theology: "Let my people go." This example of Yahweh's love defines Israelite justice and makes it in practical effect the equivalent of love in action in human society.
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> Justice, therefore, localizes love and charts its course of action. It places love on the side of the oppressed, the weak, and the potential victims of exploitation.[1]

Realizing the ambiguities of an ethic of love, a concept of justice which would carry the claim of love into action in society must be implemented according to God's standard of righteousness. However, for

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[1]Lawrence E. Toombs, "Love and Justice in Deuteronomy," Interpretation, XIX (October, 1965), 408.

love to be applied through justice it must be put into action. The wrath of God cannot be viewed separate from His justice and His holiness. This is the cardinal sin of the nonresistant as he relegates God's love to such a lofty position that God's other moral attributes are treated as insignificant to the problems of war.

Israel's wars are Yahweh's wars (I Sam. 18:17; 25:28). Israel's enemies are His enemies (Judg. 5:31; I Sam. 30:26). It is not the weaponry that made Israel significant in her conquests but the relationship established with her God. Miller points out this distinction:

> So it was that war was regarded as a highly sacral affair in which the people assembled together, made sacrifices, purified themselves, and sought God's aid and counsel, generally by some oracle device. Numbers and weapons were regarded as relatively unimportant, as far as Israel was concerned. The important thing was that they were not to fear but to trust in God to deliver them. The Israelite army fought in the battles, but victory was generally wrought by God's sending terror or panic into the ranks of the enemy. The climax of the holy war was the herem, or ban, in which, according to Yahweh's express command, the Israelites were to wipe out the enemy, his family, and his possessions. Failure to carry out the ban could result in death, as in the case of Achan (Josh. 7), or the loss of a crown, as in the case of Saul (I Sam. 15).[1]

The Old Testament sees that theme, God's sovereignty, not merely as a theological affirmation but as the very pivot upon which the life of the disciple should revolve. Where there is confidence in God's control over the lives of men and the world, the believer can stand firm in faith and trust.

Nonetheless, man's free will allows him the freedom of choice. War is also a human activity. Men do not have to fight regardless of the

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[1] Patrick D. Miller, Jr., "God the Warrior," Interpretation, XIX (January, 1965), 40.

incentives or secondary causes. Men choose to do so.

The Scriptures clearly teach that war is to be used as a means toward the realization of justice in human relations. It belongs to the essence of the government to use force when necessary to accomplish its God-given task. This the nation of Israel did in conquering the land of Canaan as God's wrath was poured out upon the Canaanites for their iniquity while He used the Israelites as His instrument to implement His divine justice.

God's use of human vengeance

When we discern that God's holiness permits Him to use punitive measures in eradicating evil, the concepts of His wrath, His justice and His love become meaningful to correlating a systematic theology rooted in the Scriptures. Moses' song contained the phrase: "The Lord is a man of war" (Exod. 15:3). There are more than thirty-five references in the Old Testament in which God commands the use of force. The author of Hebrews extols the historic conquerings of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel (Heb. 11:30-34). These were men who became mighty in war and who put foreign armies to flight.

In examining God's use of human vengeance, the basis for the Canaanite extermination involved the fulfillment of the prophesied necessity for Canaan's iniquity to be full (Gen. 15:13-16; Deut. 18:12). Israel is given a severe warning lest they absorb the corrupt practices of the Canaanites (Deut. 31:8, 16-17). Israel's covenant with Yahweh is renewed concerning the necessity for fulfilling the conquest of the Canaanites in addition to receiving a reiterated warning (Exod. 23:20-33; 34:11-17).

Prior to the invasion of the land of Canaan, Joshua, the leader of Israel's army, gives a reiteration of God's command:

> And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into the Jordan [Josh. 3:9-11].

Joshua was able to reiterate God's command regarding the divine conquest of the land of Canaan because of the dual relationship existing between God and Israel in this conquest. The command is repeated throughout the book of Numbers specifying this divine relationship regarding the annihilation of the Canaanites. As Israel sets out on her course to conquer Canaan, God delivers them at Mount Hormah on this dual relationship because of Israel's continued trust in Yahweh (Num. 21:2-3). Israel's request to pass peacefully through the Amorite country is refused which results in the complete conquest over the Amorites (Num. 21:21-32; Deut. 2:26-37). Again Israel's conquest at Edrei is seen in this dual relationship between God and Israel (Num. 21:33-35; Deut. 3:1-11). It is this concurrent arrangement between God and Israel that enables Israel to conquer the land. The message is enunciated repeatedly, God's deliverance of the enemy into Israel's hands, and Israel's smiting of their enemy (Num. 25:4-5, 6-18; 31:1-3, 4-12; Deut. 2:24-27; 3:18, 22; 7:1-7, 17-18, 20-26; 13:12-18; 20:1-20).

In addition to God's use of Abraham as an instrument of human vengeance to free Lot from his captors by means of warfare against the kings (Gen. 14:12-24), God prepares His people in Egypt's bondage for their de-

liverance to the promised land of Canaan (Exod. 3:8, 17; 6:4, 8; 12:25; 13:5, 11). But rather than march directly toward their promised land in Canaan they are instructed to not go directly there in spite of traveling "armed" out of their bondage (Exod. 13:17-18). When 13:18 is connected with 12:51 the translation becomes quite certain that Israel was brought out of the land of Egypt by "their armies." If these Israelites would have been discouraged by a confrontation of war against the Philistines after making their miraculous exodus out of Egypt, it is apparent that they would have considered themselves physically unfit and untrained to encounter combat. If the Lord was supposed to supernaturally drive out the inhabitants of Canaan without using any physical force by Israel, why would Israel fear war unless they would physically be involved? Would the Lord have failed to drive out these inhabitants of Canaan supernaturally? But, assuming the Israelites departed from Egypt unarmed, yet "harnessed" or marching in an orderly fashion, what would hinder them from marching into the promised land if God is to provide a "supernatural" means to drive out the present inhabitants of Canaan? Why then the fear of war?

The nonresistant arguments fail to substantiate a premise upon which a case can be built. Murder is specifically condemned, yet God commands the Israelites to annihilate the Canaanites because of their utter corruptness and idolatry. Thus, all killing is not murder. The biblical nonresistant is forced then to resort to the New Testament which he emphatically states is the foundation of the nonresistant argument.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON NONRESISTANCE

With the coming of Christ, sin is atoned for once for all, the concession to spiritual immaturity is removed, and human conduct is restored to its original place. Thus the perfect covenant of the New Testament restores human conduct to its rightful place where it was before the fall. These nonresistant teachings culminate in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, whereupon they declare that the New Testament way is to aim at love, not at justice. The Sermon on the Mount is the keynote of the nonresistant position.

The Delineation of New Testament Nonresistance

Upon analyzing the nonresistant's argument, it appears that the ethos of the New Testament is his final authority in matters of faith and morals. Yet the ethos of the New Testament is precisely what each individual chooses to imagine it to be. All objective standards vanish away, and every man reads into the Bible what he wants to find there. Even though the Sermon on the Mount is used as his keynote, there is no true objective standard for the nonresistant to follow since he treats as authoritative only such commands as he deems fitting to his cause and rejects what does not correlate to his nonresistant propositions.

A nonresistant argument is to interpret the new covenant as fulfilled in Jesus Christ whereby the old covenant that Israel had to live under was now done away with forever. It becomes incumbent for the nonre-

sistant to interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament which is considered as superior for the Christian.

The emphasis on progressive revelation is said to raise the moral law itself to higher ground. What was explicitly commanded in the old, He forbids in the new. The Old Testament ethic is laid aside as inferior, overruled, and outdated, while the New Testament Christian ethic supercedes all other ethics. The nonresistant seeks to press the legitimate use of progressive revelation into a meaning not intended by its definition. The issuance of contradictory moral commands by God in different ages seems to imply moral development in God. The reliance upon God's permissive will for a lower standard in the Old Testament cannot suffice for an answer to the problems raised by such an interpretation. Morality in the Old Testament would no longer appear as identical with what God commands.

The nonresistant writers fail to comprehend the relationship of the kingdom of God, prophetically fulfilled upon the earth when our Lord Jesus Christ returns at the second advent, with the present reign of Christ in the believer's life through the Spirit's ministry. Christ's kingdom is viewed as not being a kingdom of earthly power, nor is God's wrath manifest within it. Basically it is a kingdom of love characterized by the spirit of meekness. The Sermon on the Mount becomes crucial to the nonresistant argument. A life of Christian love is the warp and woof of his philosophy.

The nonresistant gives specific attention to Matthew 5-7 which is his preamble to Christian ethics and establishes the foundation for his nonresistant argument. He declares that Jesus explicitly modifies the Mosaic civil code since it did not measure up to the standards of God's

spiritual kingdom now revealed in the fundamental moral law of the New Testament. The fundamental moral law of God is fulfilled by the Christian when he obediently responds to nonresistant ethics.

When Jesus is said to have accentuated a morality which is qualitatively different from the Old Testament claims, certain questions must be answered. Did Jesus challenge the written record of the law or just the oral interpretation of it by the religious leaders? Five times within the context Jesus declares "Ye have heard that it was said" (Matt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43), not "That it was written;" however, when He chastizes these religious leaders, Jesus asks them, "Have ye not read?" (12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31). The differentiation is not between the Mosaic teaching and the teaching of Christ, but it is between the illicit addition and reductions of the revealed law, and its true requirement as Jesus expounds it. Carl Henry elucidates this point:

> The specific references make it apparent that Jesus is not changing the Law, but rather unveiling its inner requirements. The prohibition against murder (21ff.) and adultery (27ff.) apply to the life of thought as well as of deed; the moral obligation they impose is spiritual, and not merely external. Jesus does not set forth a higher law of his own to discredit the Old Testament law, but declares that the requirement of Old Testament law was more exacting than the current tradition taught. This interpretation fits the facts in every instance in which the formula occurs in the Sermon.[1]

Much confusion has developed over the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount because so few have sought to examine the background of the book of Matthew. When it is understood that this is a book written primarily to Jews seeking to prove that Jesus Christ was the prophesied Mes-

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[1] Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 307.

siah in addition to answering the question why Israel was set aside and the kingdom postponed, then the theme, the kingdom offered to the Jews, brings the proper relationship of the Sermon on the Mount into view. The Sermon on the Mount is not the constitution of the kingdom, nor a plan of salvation, but rather it is Christ's exposition of the righteousness which the Law demanded for the basis of entrance into the kingdom, indicating that observance of Pharisaic rules is not satisfying to God.

In response to criticisms by nondispensational against the dispensational teaching about the Sermon, Ryrie states:

> It says two things: (1) The Sermon is primarily related to the Messianic kingdom. (2) Like all Scripture, the Sermon is applicable to believers in this age. It is only the first of these two that opponents of dispensationalism mention, but the application of the Sermon to believers now is also clearly taught by dispensationalists.[1]

He continues:

> Thus the dispensational interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount simply tries to follow consistently the principle of literal, normal, or plain interpretation. It results in not trying to relegate primarily and fully the teachings of the Sermon to the believer in this age. But it does not in the least disregard the ethical principles of the Sermon as being not only applicable but also binding on believers today. Can this be called "cutting out pages from the Bible"?[2]

The nonresistants' key text within the Sermon on the Mount is Matthew 5:38-48, which is the major premise for all further arguments expounded by the nonresistant position. Matthew 5:38-39 utilizes the Old Testament upon which to build its biblical pronouncements (Exod. 21:22-26; Lev. 24:17-20; Deut. 19:18-21). Campbell clarifies the meaning of this

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[1] Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 107.

[2] Ibid., p. 109.

passage:

> It is plain to see again that Christ is not simply seeking to expound the Mosaic law, nor to free it from rabbinical interpretations; He is doing so much more for He is setting forth new principles that are to govern His earthly kingdom. This particular section on non-resistance has caused great difficulty when writers have failed to grasp its kingdom setting.[1]

Barnhouse illustrates the meaning when he declares:

> The commentators have struggled over the verse ordaining no resistance to evil (Mt. 5:39) because the masculine and the neuter are the same in the original, and it can not be certain whether the command is against resistance of the evil one or the evil deed. In either case we are most certainly to resist in this day and age. "Submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). These are our orders for today. Those who attempt to build pacifism on the Sermon on the Mount cannot justify their position. The day of non-resistance will come, but Christ will be back first to establish His rule in such a way that any departure from it shall be immediately judged. To attempt to put all of these precepts into literal fulfillment in our day will be as impossible as any attempt to cause the sun to shine by night.[2]

The crux of the nonresistant argument is that love and killing are mutually exclusive because killing is not an expression of redemptive love. The doctrine that absolute nonresistance is the only valid expression of Christian love is groundless. God is love, yet He resists the evil and employs force against the wicked (Ps. 136). The Old Testament enjoined love to enemies, but also provided for the punishment of wrongdoers. Parents are to love their children, yet they are to resist, with corporal punishment if necessary, whenever their children incline toward evil (Prov. 13:24; 22:15). Jesus was the perfect example of love in action,

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[1] Donald K. Campbell, "Interpretation and Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1953), p. 132.

[2] D. G. Barnhouse, His Own Received Him Not, But . . . (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933), p. 39.

yet He resisted the evildoers in the temple (John 2:13-16). Other Scriptures show that sinners within the church are to be resisted (I Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13; 6:1; Gal. 2:4, 5; II Thess. 3:14; I Tim. 5:20; III John 10).

The nonresistant affirms that Jesus' requirement for the Christian to love his enemy is in full accord with Pauline teaching as Hershberger discusses one of the Corinthian problems:

> The difficulty with the Corinthians was that in their relations each one was aiming at justice. But the New Testament way is to aim at love, not at justice. In aiming at justice the result is frequently a selfish struggle for power, position, or wealth. In aiming at love, however, the result is often justice as well as love. But even if this result does not follow, the Christian must continue to love anyway, for according to the teaching of Christ His disciples should be willing to suffer in justice rather than to forsake the way of love.[1]

Since this contrast is repeated through nonresistant literature, it is necessary that a brief examination be given to the relationships of God's love, justice and holiness. Because most nonresistant authors consider the love of God as His central attribute, the moral attribute of God's holiness needs to be brought back into its biblical focus as the regulative principle of all His other moral attributes; for His throne is established on the basis of His holiness. As God is perfectly holy, He must also be perfectly just. His holiness will not suffer Him to do anything but what is righteous. Thiessen states concerning God's holiness:

> It is the attribute by which God wanted to be especially known in Old Testament times. See Lev. 11:44, 45; Josh. 24:19; I Sam. 6:20; Ps. 22:3; Isa. 40:23; Ezek. 39:7; Hab. 1:12. It is emphasized by the bounds set about Mount Sinai when God came down upon the mountain (Exod. 19:12, 13, 21-25), by the division of the tabernacle and temple into the holy and most holy places (Ex. 26:33; I Kings 6:16), by the prescribed offerings that must be brought if an Israelite

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[1] Guy F. Hershberger, War, Peace, and Nonresistance (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953), p. 53.

would approach God (Lev. 1-7), by the institution of a special priesthood to mediate between God and the people (Lev. 8-10), by the many laws about impurity (Lev. 11-15), by the set feasts of Israel (Lev. 23), and by the isolation of Israel in Palestine (Num. 23:9; Deut. 33:28). In the New Testament holiness is ascribed to God with less frequency than that in the Old, but it is not entirely wanting. See John 17:11; Heb. 12:10; I Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 4:8.[1]

When these godly terms are used in the Christian ethic, there must be a proper correlation between them. To side-step a confrontation of justice when a nonresistant squarely meets an issue necessitating a specific decision, he cannot amalgamate his answer with a mere response of love. If a demonstration of love is not based on a just answer, it is pure vanity, not love. Likewise, justice must be tendered with love or the result may appear as cruelty. God has instituted a moral government in the world, imposed just laws upon the creatures, and attached sanctions thereto. Divine justice requires that disobedience be met with a bestowal of punishment.

The law of love requires that Christians alleviate the oppressed and achieve justice for the ill-treated, in so far as they are able. God always has extolled the virtue of justice and has commanded His people to assist in procuring it. Judges were expressly forbidden to show partiality in their verdicts, being under this solemn charge: "Justice and only justice you shall follow" (Deut. 16:18-20). The Psalmist sang: "The Lord loves justice" (Ps. 37:28). One sin which separates the people from God was injustice (Isa. 59:8). The prophet lamented that justice was far from the people and had been turned back (Isa. 59:9, 14). Amos pleaded, "Let

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[1] H. C. Thiessen, Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 129.

justice roll down like waters" (Amos 5:24). A classic text is: "He has showed you, Oh man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:9). Jesus emphasized the need for justice in His accusation of His contemporaries for neglecting justice, which He terms one of the weightier matters of the law of God (Matt. 23:23).

In our immoral society, justice is seldom attained by the demonstration of absolute nonresistance. Calloused, hardened men are persuaded to desist from evil by matched or superior forces. To prevent a total victory for evil, a balance of power must be achieved. Resistance is indispensible to the cause of justice. Hoitenga's advocacy of nonresistance displays an ignorance of justice when he declares that war is to be placed in the company of the "new morality."[1] Yet, his use of the moral law contradicts his major premise when he asserts the right to preserve life, and hence, a right of self-defense.[2]

The illogical application of absolute nonresistance is illustrated by Throckmorton:

> My non-resisting love for the gangster while he beats my wife is "sacrificial" only in the sense that I sacrifice my wife to a criminal who beats her, not, presumably, because it is God's will but, more probably, because it is the criminal's will; and such non-resistance will undoubtedly not change his intentions or alter the outcome of the event. At the time, it will probably be an irrelevant factor. Non-resistance would not be redemptive for the criminal, though its motive might well be love. At the moment of the event, redemption is not an issue primarily involved, though it may become an issue after the event when, if caught, the man may

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[1] Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr., "War and the New Morality," The Reformed Journal, XVIII (February, 1968), 10.

[2] Ibid., p. 11.

> respond to forgiveness. The pacifist too quickly identifies redemption with non-resisting love. Non-resistance in the case of an attack upon one's self might well reveal love which could redeem; but one's non-resistance in the case of attack on someone else contains, it would seem, a very small redemptive possibility. And I find no word in the gospels which commands this.[1]

The absolute nonresistant does not face up to the implications involved in the sacredness of life. Whose life is sacred? The innocent who is being ravaged or the man who is doing the ravaging? The basis for applying force to intervene between the attacker and the attacked is that life is sacred for all. This is one of the basic principles for implementing a just war against an aggressive enemy. A just war is used to restrain evil. It is not primarily to bring good. War is permitted by God so that men might see through it, and discern what sin really is. During peace times man becomes complacent toward sin and views human nature with optimism. One of the climactic illustrations from the Scriptures concerning God's application of justice by means of force against evildoers is demonstrated when He casts the unregenerate into the lake of fire. He is the same God of love who sent His son to die on the cross for the unsaved. What infinite love He displayed for us! Even so, what justice!

The nonresistant asserts that man is to do to others as he desires them to do to him. In popular thought this is the golden rule as voiced by Jesus (Matt. 7:12). The nonresistant observes an irreconcilable tension between this principle and resistance. Nonresistants regard resistance as the antithesis of applied mercy and love. Nonetheless, it is conceivable

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[1] Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., "The Teachings of Jesus and Pacifism," The Joy of Study, ed. by Sherman E. Johnson (New York: Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 19.

to apply the golden rule and the principle of mercy by directing resistance toward an evildoer. If the Christian should come upon a person being attacked, how can he show mercy and fulfill the golden rule unless he restrains the attacker? If he did nothing to stop the attack, would he be an instrument of mercy?

At the close of Jesus' earthly ministry, He instructed His disciples to do an unusual thing: "Let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one" (Luke 22:36). Biblical exegesis according to a consistent literal interpretation will not allow the purse, the scrip, the shoes to be spiritualized; why spiritualize the sword? To say that the Lord meant the sword of the Spirit is poor exegesis, and to say that He referred to the two swords when He said: "It is enough" is poor understanding. Jesus is not referring to the two swords, but to His conversation. It was an abrupt dismissal. The very fact that His disciples did carry around, at least, two swords is evidence that they were not nonresistant. Yet, was this appropriate for Jesus to suggest His disciples if He has been teaching them to live according to nonresistant principles? General Harrison remarks:

> Romans 1:18-32 tells us that in order to reveal His wrath against men's rebellion against Him, God has given them up to all of those personal moral evils which cause the troubles in society, among which is war. In Old Testament times, the nation Israel lived in just such a world, and today, so does the Christian.[1]

Before this very night was over Peter will use one of these very swords to try to cut off the head of Malchus, only to be sternly rebuked by

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[1] William K. Harrison, Jr., "May a Christian be a Soldier?" Command, 25th Anniversary issue (1968), 28.

Jesus (Matt. 26:52; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:54-71). Jesus had been teaching daily in the temple that the Scriptures must be fulfilled, and then, the gospel writers portray a scene filled with human interest because it involved the emotions of all those concerned with the incident. Davis applies the higher critical interpretation to this passage:

> Thus three conclusions may be drawn from the story: (1) Jesus himself did not use a sword nor did he sanction the use of a sword. (2) There is considerable doubt that the swordsman, if one existed, was a member of the band of twelve disciples; and, (3) There is reasonable doubt, based upon exegetical inquiry, that a sword was drawn or used in this circumstance.[1]

If Jesus had been teaching nonresistance daily, why did not His followers immediately respond to this situation by acts of nonresistance? Instead, one of them drew a sword and attempted to behead one of the priest's servants; while the others soon found themselves making quick tracks in the sand as they fled from the scene. What an opportunity for these disciples to display Christ's teaching of nonresistance into reality. Within hours Christ would reach the epitome of the life of a nonresistant, the cross. With such tremendous meaning unfolding before their eyes regarding the climax of nonresistance, the obvious step of these disciples of Christ would be to do as their Master was doing. But such was not the response. Instead they flee from the scene as they saw their Lord seized and taken away for mock trials that would result in His death.

It is clear that Jesus disavowed Peter's rash action, but certain unusual circumstances involved in this event make it illogical to assume

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[1] Guy M. Davis, Jr., "An Opinion Concerning the Pacifism of Jesus," The Journal of Bible and Religion, XVII (July, 1949), 185.

that Christ thereby "unbelted" every soldier. The betrayal and subsequent death of Jesus Christ were according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. Jesus realized that it was God's will for Him to be taken. Since Peter's action was calculated to hinder the plan of God, he was in error. However, because it was God's will for Jesus to die by the hands of lawless men, that appropriate atonement might be made for sins, this does not argue that under normal circumstances an innocent victim is not to be protected against lawless men.

The soldier's occupation appears to be morally acceptable, since the New Testament tells of numerous soldiers who sought God's law for themselves and who were never commanded to leave the military. There is no indication that any of these discontinued his military service upon believing in Christ. Soldiers approached John the Baptist, inquiring what they should do to bear fruits that befit repentance. There was no injunction to resign from the military (Luke 3:14). Cornelius is an example of a soldier converted to Christ (Acts 10:11). The jailor whom Paul baptized at Philippi is another example of a "sword-bearer" who became a Christian (Acts 16:23-34). Finally, the centurion whose servant is healed due to the display of personal faith the military commander had in Jesus Christ (Matt. 8:5-10; Luke 7:1-10). While Jesus commends him for his tremendous faith, He does not exhort this believing officer to leave his vocation in the military. Apparently, Jesus recognized the validity of such an occupation as His exhortation is given through Paul that men ought to remain in the calling in which they are called (I Cor. 7:20). Does this mean that individuals who receive Christ as their personal Savior

while involved in an illicit occupation should likewise continue in it? Obviously not, as illustrated by Christ's exhortation to the woman taken in an act of adultery, that she go "and sin no more" (John 8:3-11). If Jesus recognized this difference between what is moral and immoral in a person's vocation, what right does the nonresistant have in labeling the military occupation as immoral?

The martyrdom of Stephen and his final words: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them," (Acts 7:60) is an example of the nonresistant ethic. The assumption in this argument is that a great body of Christians were present during the stoning and that they refrained from assisting solely because they believed it is ethically wrong to resist the evildoer. However, it is uncertain and improbable that very many believers were at the scene of Stephen's martyrdom. His death was the result of an outburst of mob action, which occurred because of his defense before the council. Did Stephen die a death by stoning because he was a nonresistant, or was his death due to his personal testimony for Jesus as the Messiah? The context of the passage indicates that Stephen was a mighty preacher of the Word of God, causing men to come to grips with their filthy sins as they displayed deep conviction when Stephen concluded his message. Such conviction led to Stephen's death.

Intrinsic to the nonresistant's argument is the application of his theory through a consistent practice. His nonresistance must be absolute in all of life's involvement or it faces the wrath of fallibility. It is this very indictment against his theory that causes it to prove unworkable in this world. The nonresistant is endeavoring to live as if he has al-

ready reached a state of perfection in his Christian life, whereupon he requires that all of life's relationships respond in this perfectionist attitude as well as the daily appropriation. He is not only separating himself from the sinful society but expects this sinful society to respond toward him as if he was living in perfect sinlessness. The nonresistant's application of ultimate sanctification in a period of world history that still demands the process of spiritual maturity through experiential sanctification, causes him to live an incoherent life before the world. Needless to say, it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit which works toward perfecting the believer's life in Christ through the application of the Scriptures, and not through nonresistant principles.

It behooves the biblical interpreter to examine the next step which the biblical nonresistant takes in reference to following Christ's example which is interwoven into the very fabric of the Christian gospel.

The Demand of Nonresistance as an Integral Part of the Gospel

Whereas some pacifists and nonresistants would regard nonresistance as one of the results of the cross of Christ, the biblical nonresistant enunciates that the doctrine of the "atoning work of Christ and the doctrine of love and nonresistance [italics mine] are inextricably intertwined."[1] While the doctrine of salvation, the atoning work of Christ on the cross is normally related as the substance of the Gospel, the nonresistant position endeavors to show that there is such a close integration

[1]Guy F. Hershberger, "Christian Nonresistance: Its Foundation and Its Outreach," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, XXIV (April, 1950), 156.

of the doctrine of salvation and the ethical teachings of the Scriptures, that nonresistance is not something added to the gospel, but it is an integral part of the gospel. However, this emphasis on "doing" as Christ did, and "following" in His steps tends to perpetrate the concept of salvation by works.

When such an application is made of Christ's atoning work on the cross, the nonresistants have relegated Jesus to a human martyr instead of man's Savior from sin. Chatfield remarks:

> The attractiveness of this concept can be seen if it is remembered that pacifists had renounced physical violence and yet were dedicated to changing social conditions. In Jesus they found an historical person who overcame evil not by supernatural or physical power but rather through the force of His personality. This person was essentially a man like themselves.[1]

If Jesus is simply a great personality to imitate as an example to follow, it is then disclosed why all men have the natural ability to imitate Jesus' nonresistance. While all biblical nonresistant's would deny that any slander is made against Christ, this approach to His atoning work on the cross is a practical denial of His deity. It is at this point where some nonresistant writers approach heretical implications which causes the biblical interpreter to examine carefully what the nonresistant actually says.

The New Testament does not present any direct teachings on the subject of war. This does not mean that the New Testament is indifferent on the matter. It does mean that Christ and His disciples assumed the Old

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[1] E. C. Chatfield, Jr., "Pacifism and American Life: 1914 to 1941" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Graduate School of Vanderbilt University, 1965), p. 381.

Testament to be sufficiently explicit on the subject. Scripture is an organic whole: Christ came not to supplant but to fulfill the teachings of the Old Testament. Christ and the apostles regarded Scripture as divinely inspired. The guarantee of the truth was for them contained in the words: "It is written." Thus, to accept Him implies an acceptance of the Old Testament.

One of the more profuse exponents of this approach to nonresistance is Hershberger which is seen when he states:

> For some strange reason so-called Christians often tend to make a difference between the Gospel and nonresistance, or between the Gospel and the ethical teachings of the New Testament. They stress the importance of preaching the doctrine of salvation, the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and tell us this is the Gospel.[1]

He continues with an explanation of I Peter 2:21-24:

> Then Peter explains further what this means. He says that Christ in suffering for us left us an example that we should follow His steps in the way of love and nonresistance, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." That is, we as Christians are to manifest that same spirit of love and nonresistance which took Christ to the cross to die for the atonement of our sins.[2]

Are Christians able to die on a cross for the atonement of sins? Is it possible for Christians to redeem the transgressors through nonresistance? Henry A. Fast, a nonresistant Mennonite, emphatically declares:

> The principle of nonresistance is also inherent in the cross. The cross is not merely going the second mile, but going clear to the end of the road, and giving all, even self, in order to redeem [italics mine] the evildoer. The cross is not only God's supreme redemptive act in history; it is also a picture of the self-giving, outgoing love with which God from all eternity has sought to fulfill His redemptive purpose to reconcile men to their

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[1] Hershberger, War . . . , pp. 58-59. [2] Ibid., p. 59.

> heavenly Father and to their earthly brother. This way of the cross, Jesus urges, is also inevitable for His followers if they would work redemptively [italics mine] in human life and relationships, and in conflict situations.[1]

Jesus' redemptive purpose in His sacrifice on the cross does not include a pattern for believers to imitate as a way of life. This was a sacrifice never to be repeated and never emulated. Our Lord's death upon the cross had relations and meanings to which nothing in pattern of life corresponds. He died on the cross as the world's redeemer once and for all (I Pet. 3:18; Heb. 10:10). Jesus, in His death on the cross, is not in the New Testament held up chiefly as an example for our imitation, but as the object of our faith. Men are called not to imitate Him, but to trust Him as Savior. Jesus' redemptive sacrifice once for all for the world's sin need not and cannot be repeated.

Instead of using a consistent application of hermeneutical principles to interpret these Christological passages, Macgregor sounds out his redundant theme of Christ's redemptive purpose through nonresistance:

> For this positive redemptive method of overcoming evil, when carried to the uttermost, finds its supreme illustration in the Cross, where Jesus refused the method of force in dealing with the world's evil and prayed for His enemies instead, thereby setting forth in action the power of suffering and sacrificial love to vindicate the moral order and recreate a sinful world.[2]

Macgregor goes on to say that Jesus' pacifist ethic was part and parcel to His death on the cross. The cross became the climax to Christ's life of nonresistant ethics.[3]

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[1] Henry A. Fast, Jesus and Human Conflict (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1959), p. 204.

[2] G. H. C. Macgregor, The New Testament Basis of Pacifism and The Relevance of an Impossible Ideal (Nyack: Fellowship Publ., 1954), p. 37.

[3] Ibid., p. 49.

An incisive response to such nonresistant propositions is given by Boobyer in his analysis on the way of Jesus:

> To see that Jesus regarded such a life as the God-appointed path for himself and his disciples in the discharge of their mission of redemption is one thing. To show that he also looked upon it as "a new, final and authentic means for the overcoming of evil" (Canon Raven) in the fulfillment of that mission is quite another, and is by no means implicit in the former standpoint. Before this second contention can be made, there must be sufficiently explicit evidence for it. To be sure, these two conceptions although different are not mutually exclusive alternatives: Jesus may well have believed something of both. But even if he did, it would still be important to ask where he placed the emphasis. Was it so much on the instrumental efficacy of a life of love, ending in martyrdom, as Christian pacifists think? Or was it on his way and that of disciples as one which would inevitably result from faithful obedience to the will of God and which must be accepted as such irrespective of any other considerations? In short, does the Son of man of the Gospels walk before us as the exponent of a redeeming method? Or rather as the forerunner on a divinely appointed path to be trodden?[1]

The implications given by the nonresistant who expounds the necessity of walking exactly as Jesus walked, even to the point where death may be inflicted upon a cross, are devastating. Although much of the soteriological language by the nonresistant is vague and symbolical in nature, it is apparent that he is teaching the moral influence theory of Christ's atonement on the cross. The nonresistant interpretation of the cross as essentially a method of reaching to the heart of the evildoer in a way which can change his evil will and mind falls within the category of Abelardian theology.

With Jesus as the example for all nonresistants to imitate, was He consistent in demonstrating absolute nonresistance during His earthly

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[1] G. H. Boobyer, "Christian Pacifism and the Way of Jesus," Hibbert Journal, LV (July, 1957), 355-56.

life? The issue of Jesus cleansing the temple of its "den of thieves," recorded by all four of the gospels (Matt. 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-47; John 2:13-16), displays both an attitude and activity contrary to a nonresistant ethic. Of the four gospel writers, it is the "beloved disciple" who gives the description of Jesus using a whip of cords to drive out those who degraded God's holy temple (John 2:15). Because such an incident occurred in Jesus' life, Davis attacks the account by applying the higher critical interpretation when he regards the story as unlikely historical in its present form.[1] Lasserre approaches this same account by obliterating the normative use of the Greek grammar.[2] Because the presupposition of nonresistance is so strong in some nonresistant exponents, Hershberger must declare that it is impossible to believe that Jesus would conduct Himself in such a manner.[3]

The nonresistant will quote the passage from I Peter 2:23 to indicate that Jesus was obedient to the nonresistant ethic, even hours before His crucifixion. Upon examining His life prior to this momentous event, it was during one of His mock trials that Jesus challenges the wrong use of punishment against Him by one of the officers standing in this crowd (John 18:22-23). Jesus' response violates the absolute nonresistant ethic enunciated in His Sermon on the Mount by not turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:39). Jesus demanded that men act according to justice, which

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[1] Davis, p. 184.

[2] Jean Lasserre, War and the Gospel, trans. by Oliver Coburn (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962), p. 47.

[3] Hershberger, p. 302.

Paul parallels during his Christian life. Paul had been unjustly condemned, imprisoned, and beaten at Philippi, causing him to demand that due process of the law be implemented (Acts 16:37). A similar illustration of Paul's resistance to unjust application of Roman law is described by Ladd:

> On another occassion, Paul claimed his Roman citizenship in a way that formally violated the principle of nonresistance. During his last visit in Jerusalem, when the tribune of the Roman guard was about to have Paul examined by scourging, Paul responded with the words, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?" (Acts 22:25). Paul did not submit in passive nonresistance to this severe punishment but demanded that his rights as a Roman citizen be recognized.[1]

It demands cognizance that Jesus did not exemplify a life of absolute nonresistance. What nonresistance Jesus did display had a specific relationship to His primary purpose as the Jewish Messiah. The path which He trod toward the hill at Calvary is filled with Messianic fulfillment.

Nonetheless, to disregard this truth of viewing nonresistance as an integral part of the gospel, is considered by nonresistants a serious matter since the threat of the judgment of God for this type of sin is real. Hershberger, therefore, concludes:

> What is the Gospel? It is the story of the redemptive work of Christ which makes men to be sons of God with a mind like that of Christ, constraining them to be humble, loving, blameless, harmless, peaceful, and nonresistant. All of this, and not a part of it, is the Gospel. The preacher who omits the doctrine of love and nonresistance from his sermons is not preaching the Gospel as it is given in the New Testament. Nonresistance is not something added to the Gospel. It is an integral part of the Gospel, and

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[1] George Ladd, "The Christian and the State," His, XXVIII (December, 1967), 16.

when it is omitted that which remains is something far less than the Gospel.[1]

The statements by the nonresistant exponents speak lucidly in stating the relationship between nonresistance and the gospel. Because the gospel of Jesus Christ concerns the "good news" that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world, that He was raised from the dead on account of our justification, and that by Him all who believe are justified from all things, this author must conclude with the apostle Paul that the nonresistant gospel is "another gospel" (II Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6) which Paul states "is not another," but a perversion of the gospel of God's grace. Believers in Christ are warned against all such seductive forms which deny the sufficiency of grace alone to save.

After tracing through the nonresistant's propositions concerning his approach to the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the gospel's relationship to nonresistance, a brief analysis needs to be given involving the state concept. In Philippians 3:20 Paul writes: "Our commonwealth is in heaven." Paul's heavenly remark is particularly relevant in view of his demand for civil justice at Philippi (Acts 16:37). Thus the Christian has a dual citizenship: one heavenly, the other earthly. He has two different realms of responsibility: God's and Caesar's. What then should be the Christian's attitude toward the state?

The Description of the State

The nonresistant exponent takes a distinct position relative to

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[1] Hershberger, p. 60.

the structure and function of the state, whereby a mandate is given to the biblical interpreter to see if the nonresistant relationship is truly justified. The state is primarily the political and social body ruling over a particular territory with the ultimatum to maintain law and order both from within and from without its boundaries.[1] It is not the basic definition of the state which causes any disagreement among biblical interpreters, but the clarifications attached to the basic definition whereby the original meaning is given a distinctive import. Penner clarifies this import when he relates: "Further, it has been shown that the state is a necessity in sinful society. It must therefore be concluded that the state exists as a sinful necessity. Therefore the state cannot be Christian."[2]

He continues:

> From this study and the conclusions which have been made, it follows that the Christian cannot participate in any function of human government, or act on behalf of any state or society, which involves him in those things which God has forbidden the Christian. This means, specifically, that the Christian cannot participate in any function which is directly connected with the retributive action of the state.[3]

The nonresistant view is at odds with the teaching of Christ when He said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 23:21; Mark 12:17). The context indicates Jesus spoke of the obligation of men to pay taxes to the existing government. However, in the light of Paul's admonition to Christian believers to support civil government, found in Romans 13:1-7, much more is included than payment of

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[1] Archie Penner, The Christian, The State, and the New Testament (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen & Sons, Ltd., 1959), p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 118.

[3] Ibid., pp. 120-21.

taxes, or an obligation to "render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." The injunction is based by Paul on the prior premise that every one must be subject to the higher powers, civil powers being ordained of God, there being no power but of God.

In contrast to Penner's nonresistant position on the state, Dawson presents an interesting insight on the scriptural idea of the state:

> It is significant that Jesus and Paul made their pronouncements before organized Roman persecution of Christians began, while Peter entered his in the midst of the severest persecution. John, in Revelation 13, confronting the worst of government hostility toward his faith, suggested only passive resistance, not political or military resistance. This world show a fixed Christian idea concerning the state.[1]

The Christian's relationship to civil government is further illustrated in the Scriptures through several Old Testament personalities who entered the service of their government. Pharaoh set Joseph over the land of Egypt. Darius made Daniel one of the three rulers over the kingdom. That these two men were officers of civil governments is undeniable. In closing his letter to Rome, Paul mentions Erastus, the city treasurer at Corinth (Rom. 16:23). In addition to demanding civil justice from the Roman government, Paul seeks civil protection when he depends upon the two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen provided by the Roman government (Acts 23:12-25). Later, the apostle appeals to Caesar's judicial system for justice and protection (Acts 25:11, 12). The Bible has no place for anarchy or negation of government.

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[1] Joseph M. Dawson, "The Christian View of the State," Christianity Today, I (June 24, 1957), 3.

That a Christian cannot participate in the activities of his state is totally unfounded and unbiblical as seen in those passages of Scripture which relate to the believer and his civil government. The general concept has been that politics may be naturally dirty, but this need not be true. The manifestation of corruption within government is due to the participants in government. Where politicians hold to immoral and unethical ideals, then what the public views is the fruit of these corrupt politicians. Christians ought to become involved in their local, state, and national governments. Taylor comments on this political confrontation: "Our thesis therefore is that believers can enter politics. They can be elected. They can be honest. They can maintain their spiritual life and, moreover, they can have a tremendous impact on Congress itself."[1]

Because of the position the nonresistant holds toward the state, he encounters the problem of not projecting a substantial witness for his faith in Christ. This insight is expressed by Mininger:

> Another limitation in our practice of nonconformity has been the tendency to think of the secular society as outside of our concern. The result is that we idolate ourselves so completely from it that we are not able to fulfill our full social responsibility and are not in sufficiently close touch with it to reach it effectively with the Gospel. We have sometimes sought to get out of the world rather than to live the Christian life and give our Christian witness within the world. We have been too well satisfied to live and let live (or live and let die!), rather than live and make alive. We have built walls to keep the world out and those same walls have kept the Gospel in.[2]

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[1] Clyde W. Taylor, "Involvement," Bibliotheca Sacra, CXXIII (January-March, 1966), 20.

[2] Paul Mininger, "The Limitations of Nonconformity," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, XXIV (April, 1950), 167.

The danger in nonresistance is that it oversimplifies the problem of attaining peace and leads us into spiritual apathy. The nonresistant talks as though the renunciation of war were the principal requirement for salvation, with the conscientious objector viewed as the saint. Peace in the sense of the absence of hostilities is good, but it is not the highest good that men can and should seek. The nonresistant attacks the symptom rather than the disease. The fighting and violence between men will disappear only when that which gives rise to the fighting and violence is overcome, namely, sin. Harrison reveals the biblical reason for the continuation of war:

> The reason for the perpetuation of war is that man will not eliminate it. He is enmeshed in the chains of his own evil will and desires. Nothing that peaceful men can do can overcome this evil, whether by the efforts of philosophy, the proclamation of the "Christian ethic," redistribution of wealth, disarmament, international organization, or published laws. All men, peaceful or otherwise, must reckon with the fact of evil in their own natures. It is folly to assume that peace-loving men are sinless and that only the war-mongers are sinful. The desire for peace is not an abiding characteristic of unregenerate man.[1]

Recognizing that lawlessness will continue in this world as long as men refuse to receive Christ as their personal Savior, the Christian has specific responsibilities to his government to enable this divine institution to operate as a ruler through law and order. Human governments are as divinely given as the church. This authority began in the days of Noah when he and his family were saved from the flood. In the Noahic covenant, God placed government in human hands to the greatest degree,

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[1] William K. Harrison, "Christianity and Peace in Our Day," Christianity Today, I (October 29, 1956), 14.

which judicial expression is the taking of human life. Nor has this authority ever been repealed. Governments are still instituted of God and accountable to God.

Christian obedience to the state is expounded in two basic passages of Scripture, Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13-14. Certain truths are evident from an exegesis of Romans 13:1-7, which are: (1) that governing authorities are instituted by God; (2) that there is a definite purpose for governing authorities; (3) that to achieve this purpose, governing authorities may use the sword; (4) that in consummating this purpose, governing authorities are servants of God; and (5) that the Christian is obligated to submit to governing authorities.

No one is exempt from submitting to his civil government. All men are to submit themselves to the rulers of law and order. The obedience is not instructed on the ground of the personal merit of those in authority, but on the basis of their official station in government. He is to understand that his obedience to civil order is not only a desirable thing, but divine; for it is the will of God for the human race made in His image. This submission to government is not performed blindly, but man is to obey his civil government with discernment towards government's application of good and evil. While the state is a divinely ordained institution and demands my obedience and submission, if any demand of the state violates the will of God, the Christian is to obey God rather than man. Peter's principle of disobedience to the state is based only on a violation by the state upon an individual's freedom to worship and serve God. Whenever obedience to man is inconsistent with obedience to God,

then disobedience to man becomes a duty (Acts 5:29). Since the state has the divine right to enforce law and order against evildoers, the nonresistant cannot absolve his obedience to the state by declaring it is God's will that he refrain from such participation. If the nonresistant could prove his nonresistant philosophy as a biblical teaching for the Christian to apply in his life, then any act of coercion would be in violation of the Christian's obedience to the will of God; however, the nonresistant's argument is found wanting for biblical substantiation. It follows that the state has a right to claim the Christian's support even to the extent of war when such conflict is needed to carry out justice and enforcing international law and order. Likewise, when a believer feels convicted to participate in civil disobedience, he must realize the state has the right to enforce its civil law against him, which includes punishment by imprisonment.

The nonresistant injunctions are fulfilled when believers cultivate a placable spirit, but they never demand that Christians do evil by encouraging wickedness and permitting it to go unpunished. When the nonresistant rationalizes that nonresistance is equal to law and order, he is illogical. The basic thrust of nonresistance is demonstrated by refraining from the overt acts of evildoers and not by responses of obedience to law and order. If the parallelism between nonresistance and law and order is left standing, then this means that all men, unregenerate and regenerate, are nonresistants. This definition would therefore include all law enforcement agencies, and even the military forces.

When the state legislates laws for its citizens to obey, then the

maintenance of order in the state would out of necessity involve the enforcement of obedience to its laws. When laws are disobeyed the result is disorder. Order simply would not be maintained by the nonresistant if he refused to enforce transgressors toward obedience to the state laws. It is mere wishful thinking to believe that a display of nonresistant love would overwhelm the world's lawbreakers into obedience to the state laws. Perhaps if nonresistants could sit down at a table together with evildoers and discuss the need for obeying the law, there might be some hope. But the normal lawbreaker would not consider sitting around a peace table, let alone consider obeying the law.

During the discussion on the nonresistant view of the state, it becomes apparent that the nonresistant is forced into inconsistency regarding his obedience to the state. His "pick and choose" philosophy as to what should be obeyed and what to disobey is untenable as a pattern for Christian believers to follow in order to become Christlike in their spiritual maturity. Is peace in this world possible? It does not appear accidental that the prophets connected the message of peace on earth with the Messianic prophecies. Christians do have a message of peace, and it is this message of the Prince of Peace which will consummate the concluding chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER V

THE PROPHESIED PLAN OF GOD FOR PEACE

The Need for Preaching the Gospel in Times Like These

Man believes that he knows himself and thinks that he is capable of making a perfect world altogether without God. What he refuses to recognize and to learn by the preaching of the Gospel in a time of peace, God reveals to him by permitting war; and thereby shows him his true nature and the result of his sin. What man refuses and rejects when offered by the hand of love, he often takes when delivered to him through the medium of affliction.

Wilbur M. Smith refers to man's basic needs in relation to the biblical vision of peace:

> The basic needs and problems of mankind in this atomic, space-conquering age are no different than they were when our Lord was on earth, or even when the kingdom of Israel was established one thousand years before the Advent. . . . One of the greatest and most persistent longings is for peace, first in the inner life of the individual, then between one nation and another, and ultimately for the world.[1]

There is but one true remedy for the shedding of man's blood by man. That remedy is accepting the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sent to be the full answer to sin. But the nations of the world have stedfastly rejected God's remedy, and as long as they do, there is no other future but that wars shall continue and human blood shall flow.

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[1] Wilbur M. Smith, "The Biblical Vision of Peace," Christianity Today, III (April 13, 1959), 3.

The crisis involved in man's dilemma for universal peace is eloquently expressed by Harrison:

> In this predicament it would appear that men who face the question realistically have no hope other than to cry, Who can save us? Those who call themselves Christian would probably reply that if men are helpless only God can save them. That seems reasonable. If we lack a natural solution, we are left only with the hope of a supernatural one. Yet if one accepts the idea that we must seek help from God in ending war, several corollaries follow. First, experience confirms what the Scriptures teach, that God's help is not automatic, it must be sought. Second, although the proclamation and practice of Christianity may have hindered or mitigated war, war has not been eradicated. Third, if God's help is to be obtained, it must be done in a way approved by Him. Man cannot command God. Fourth, as long as men are intellectual and moral creatures endowed with responsible choice, they must eagerly embrace that help which God wills to give. Man cannot bargain with God. Obviously, if help is available but men spurn it, they must continue in the old path of self-destruction.[1]

World history has demonstrated the inability of men to deter humanity's crime against itself as thousands of human lives are scattered upon the face of the earth in efforts to end man's lust for power, wealth, and self-glory. The carnage of men against one another is staggering. The utter horror of man's degenerate brutality ought to convince every Christian that there is no hope of universal peace on earth until God's Son, Jesus Christ, returns to establish His millennial kingdom at His second coming.

The Christian's hope is the coming of his Savior to take him to Himself. That is the next thing in the program of God. Things are not going to get better, but worse. The horrible drama of the great tribulation is still to be played upon this earth, but the true church, composed of the regenerate believers in Christ, will miss that, for when this trib-

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[1]William K. Harrison, "Christianity and Peace in Our Day," Christianity Today, I (October 29, 1956), 14.

ulation is upon the earth, the saints will be rejoicing with Christ in the air. The biblical record expresses conclusively that there is no promise of war ending this side of the millennium.

Man's hardened degeneracy has often prevented him from reconciling with his neighbor, which necessitated that peace be obtained through the application of warfare. Smith recounts that such peace was obtained in biblical historical events:

> In the Old Testament, peace between Israel and other nations was generally the result of a military victory, such as that which involved the Amorites (I Sam. 7:14), or the king of Syria (II Sam. 10:19). Sometimes it was the result of arbitration, as we see in the peace that was made with the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:15), or the peace which temporarily prevailed between Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Israel (I Kings 22:44). God not only commanded Israel to wage war against certain peoples occupying their promised land or threatening their national security, but he himself fought for Israel.[1]

The conspicuous declaration by Jesus in Matthew 10:34 says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." The tenth chapter of Matthew is dispensational, Israelitish, and national in character, dealing with the kingdom. The kingdom is not the church, but the millennial kingdom to be set up when Christ returns. This chapter brings the history of the Jew to a climax. Jesus' coming upon earth brings division between the saved and unsaved. Our Lord's second coming is associated with the sword, for His return to the earth will bring decisive judgment upon those who rejected Him.

Jesus' only specific reference to world peace is given in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-13; Luke 21:8-11) where He em-

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[1] Smith, p. 4.

phatically states that there will be wars, including conversations about war, which will continue down to the end of this age.

Because there has never been a human way of gaining and establishing peace on earth, men will need to reckon with God's plan which clearly points to the Son of God as man's lasting hope for peace, or else they must face the consequences of their years of futility. The sole reason which permeates man's futility is sin. The answer is plain. The answer is God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Return of Christ to Establish His Righteous Government

The only hope for a peaceful world is in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign universally upon His Davidic throne in Jerusalem. The prophet Isaiah reveals that the solution to man's universal need for peace is found in the Prince of Peace:

> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this [Isa. 9:6-7].

It is impossible for this earth to have peace when it continues to war against God, just as it is for the inhabitants upon the earth to have peace when they remain at war with God. Men will continue to scheme and strive toward an organization that will solve the animosity between them, as long as God is not allowed to interfere with their plan. Yet, any organization, no matter how worthy its purpose or how honorable its laws, will yield to ineffectiveness, corruption, and destruction unless

prevented by the moral respectability of the men in it. But even if a one-world organization could agree on its rules, regulations and customs, it would still have to enforce its policies upon the inhabitants of this earth. The fact remains that all men do not seek nor desire peace. When our Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish His universal reign over the world, the nations of the world will rebel at His program. His predetermined form of government will be enforced upon a willing people. Those nations that unite to destroy His kingdom will be broken to pieces by the establishment of His righteous kingdom.[1] Pentecost relates this fact: "God's original purpose was to manifest His absolute authority and this purpose is realized when Christ unites the earthly theocracy with the eternal kingdom of God."[2]

The passage quoted from Isaiah's prophecy has to do with government, with Christ as King, the Son of David, involving judgment and justice. When at last injustice is curbed, then war will disappear. This establishment of justice, righteousness and peace is brought about solely through Christ's personal return. This promise of world peace is portrayed by Isaiah's description:

> The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of

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[1] George N. H. Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1957), III, 591.

[2] J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 492.

> Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD [Isa. 2:1-5].

The fulfillment of world peace will result when two things have taken place on the earth; His establishment of the kingdom of God, and obedience to the laws of God. The LORD will be recognized as supreme and pre-eminent. Throughout the Old Testament, universal peace is related to righteousness (Ps. 85:10). Solomon predicts this blending of peace and righteousness: "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72:7). There remains for the world only one hope, but a hope which shall not be disappointed: the coming of the Prince of Peace.

God's promise of peace is made to the people of God (Ps. 85:8), because peace belongs to the upright in heart (Ps. 37:37; 119:165). According to this divine principle there is no peace "to the wicked" (Isa. 48:22; 57:21). Peace is also promised by God to Israel (Ezek. 34:25; 37:26), and to the nations of the earth (Zech. 9:9-10). The fact that wars will end when Christ establishes His millennial government is the cause for the radical social and economic improvements throughout the world.[1] This righteous reign of Christ on earth fulfills the promises of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.[2] Jerusalem becomes the center for

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[1] John F. Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1959), p. 316.

[2] Ibid., p. 298.

world peace (Haggai 2:9; Ps. 122:5-8).

Contrary to the love ethic of nonresistance, the basic factor involved in this universal peace is righteousness (Isa. 32:16-18; Ps. 85:10; Rev. 19:11). The need for universal peace will not be fulfilled through the efforts of nonresistance, for a holy God demands that those who will dwell in peace will be pre-eminently characterized by the possession of righteousness. Our Lord's brother on earth expressed this: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace" (Jas. 3:18). Such a righteous life is the result of salvation through Christ, which is judicially reckoned to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:5-6; 10:10). It is by God's grace that a Christian lives righteously because he has been declared righteous in Christ (Rom. 3:22). But those who seek to save the world by means of nonresistance display an ignorance of God's righteousness (Rom. 10:3).

The answer to man's desperate cry for peace on earth will not be found in nonresistance or in pacifism, but only in the Prince of Peace will the world dwell in universal peace when He comes again to earth. Future peace on earth was prophesied in the angelic announcement:

> And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men [Luke 2:10-14].

What man could not do by his own selfish innovations in establishing universal peace on earth, Jesus Christ establishes such a reign as He rules His universal government of justice, peace, and righteousness.

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